

THE ADLON BAR GANG

By CARL FLICK-STEGER

The author of this article, at present in charge of one of Shanghai's radio stations, has been a journalist and writer all his life and is the author of several books. During the critical years of 1930 to 1936 he was the Central European correspondent for the Hearst Press and Universal Service and later foreign editor of "The Philadelphia Inquirer." He has seen history in the making and knows how to tell his experiences in a manner which brings historic events and names from the elevated and sometimes obscure level of editorials and history books onto the plane of human interest.—K.M.

THE GANG ON PARADE

LUNCH-time in the Adlon Bar always witnessed a parade of many of Europe's No. 1 foreign newspaper correspondents. Fritz, the bar's chief of staff, was a marvel at calling everybody by his right name, anticipating everyone's order, never obtrusive but always on hand when needed. From one o'clock on, Fritz flitted about, juggled trays piled with edibles and drinks amidst clattering dishes and the hubbub of conversation, until the lunch hour gradually faded out into silence again. One or two groups of correspondents remained to shoot craps or play poker. Thereafter outbursts such as, "Try to beat that!" or "How do you like them apples?" intermixed with guffawing were all that interrupted Fritz's afternoon nap.

Suddenly ambitious Lithuanian-born Otto Tolischus stalked in. Fired by the INS, Otto had a tough time in New York until he fell back on his feet as Berlin correspondent No. 2 of *The New York Times*, a job he owed exclusively to the kindness of Karl H. von Wiegand, Hearst's veteran peer of American journalism.

"Well, what's new?" Otto honked in a voice suggesting the advisability of a nose operation, his round fish eyes full of brisk expectancy.

"Not a thing stirring," drawled Louis Lochner, who had just sent off an exclusive story whose repercussions were going to keep Otto up all that night,

although Otto didn't know it yet. Twenty odd years in Berlin as chief correspondent of the Associated Press had made Louis ruthlessly egoistic.

Then red-faced jovial Guido Endris ambled in. Swiss-born Guido, Otto's boss, was one man everybody liked. For more than twenty years, newspaperdom in Berlin without Guido Endris would have been as unimaginable as Unter den Linden without the Brandenburger Tor.

"What do you think of them shoes, fellers?" he rasped, holding out one foot. "Just bought 'em, ain't they swell?" A low chorus of mumbled assent followed although nobody took his eyes off the dice or the cards. Everybody knew all about Guido's strange hankering. Thirty-one pairs of shoes already filled his wardrobe, and it was said that at night he would line them all up in a row on the floor and spend hours meditating over them. "Other people collect stamps and butterflies and I collect shoes, so what!" was his candid explanation.

Regular lunchers at the Adlon were also red-haired, wiry H. R. ("Knick") Knickerbocker, son of a Texas preacher, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, then with the *New York Evening Post* until it folded up, and thereafter Berlin correspondent of INS; and spinster Sigrid Schulz, the only American woman correspondent in Berlin. In the early days of 1933 a neophyte in one of the Berlin ministries got enthusiastic over her apparently

German name and her naturally blond hair and, much to the surprise of everybody and above all of Sigrid herself, gave her unusual boosting until an older hand in the Ministry read up some of the stuff she was sending her newspaper, the *Chicago Tribune*. Thereafter she fell back into the disfavor which she unquestionably merited. Sigrid just couldn't get used to a political situation that did not produce at least one cabinet crisis per month.

As for the *Chicago Daily News* correspondent, tall, sour-faced Edgar Mowrer, his stay in Berlin came to an abrupt end shortly after 1933. Somehow I can't get away from the conviction that Mowrer intentionally brought about his expulsion from Germany in order to boost the sale of his book, *Germany Puts the Clock Back*. His publisher had probably advised him: "Your manuscript isn't bad. But in order to make a best seller out of it, you've got to get into the headlines somehow. Get yourself kicked out of Germany, that'll give your stuff the necessary punch and make a martyr of you." Anyway, officialdom in Berlin soon got wise to that trick. Later, instead of expelling journalists, they were sidetracked and ignored with the usual result that their own management soon recalled them simply because they weren't able to come through with any more news.

Two other frequenters of the Adlon Bar, even though they were not foreign correspondents, belonged to the "gang." The one was blustering Douglas Miller, the American Embassy's counsellor of trade and economics, a proficient debater on the subject of why America was the world's only country that knew how to do business. One day early in 1933 he complained to me with considerable bitterness that Congressman Samuel Dickstein was misusing the whole consular and embassy staff to get all his Jewish relatives out of Galicia in order to provide government jobs for them in Washington. However, this did not prevent Doug later on from writing his widely read book, *You Can't Do Business With Hitler*. Maybe he couldn't, at least not the kind

of business he wanted to do. Incidentally, I understand his net profits out of that book have already passed a quarter of a million US dollars.

The other outsider, Rumanian-born "banker" Frank Lane, was repeatedly caught cheating at dice and poker. His speciality was finding ways and means of smuggling foreign currency out of Germany. He and Doug Miller were the thickest of friends. Official data which has meanwhile been published by the Reich Government on the financial activities of Douglas Miller in Berlin would appear to have made his friendship with Lane only natural. Anyway, the last I heard of Lane, he was serving a term in a United States penitentiary.

During 1933 shifty-eyed Quentin Reynolds arrived from New York one day to do some special writing for the INS. His girl friend was Martha Dodd, daughter of American Ambassador William E. Dodd, when she wasn't out with the Soviet diplomat Vinogradov, who is now Stalin's Ambassador to Turkey. Her father was a man without means, so she had to work for a living. What was more convenient than to work for a German newspaper? She became a staff member of the *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger*, which did not, however, prevent her from lambasting Germany when publishing the diary allegedly compiled by her father and a book of her own.

Quent Reynolds spent a delightful six months gourmandizing in Germany, largely at the expense of the Reich Government. He was wine and dined and junketed around, accepting all invitations with a slick Irish smile. And after leaving Germany glutted with good German food and all of thirty pounds heavier in weight than when he came to Berlin, he wrote a story for *Collier's Weekly* in which he tried to tell the American people that Germany was living on dog meat. Quent, as I knew him then, was ready to write anything if you paid him enough for it. Nevertheless, he's a wizard at writing sports stories, a speciality which he has mastered to perfection and should have stuck to.

A diversion from politics was always welcome. Such a relaxation was the Tempelhof Airfield where facetious Sefton Delmar of the London *Daily Mail*, always full of monkey tricks, kept us all in a roar while we waited for another round-the-world flier to arrive from his hop across the Atlantic. And when he finally did swoop down from the clouds, the attempt at interviewing a dazed, fagged-out pilot who hadn't slept for twenty-four hours and was almost completely deaf from the roar of his motor was a problem in itself. Such interviews were generally written before the plane zoomed into view.

Less fun for Hearst's correspondents was the sudden appearance of famous songstress and movie star Marion Davies. God help Hearst's man if the music hall Marion condescended to appear in wasn't jammed to the doors and there weren't at least a dozen curtain calls ("and never mind what the show costs"). The aged "chief" had no mercy for those who aroused Marion's displeasure.

Any other time of the day it was strictly business when we met to interview the chancellors and cabinet members of many nations and the great and the famous in all walks of life. But when one o'clock came all was forgotten, and the walls of the Adlon Bar re-echoed once more with the laughter and mirth of genuine relaxation. Fritz and his bar will always be remembered by every foreign correspondent who worked in Berlin.

"I SAW HITLER"

Hefty, broad-shouldered Dorothy Thompson is the prototype of the emancipated insurgent American Amazon, and I don't think Edgar Mowrer was so wrong when he remarked to me one day in Berlin that she had nerve enough to demand the American presidency. But she certainly knows how to tell a story in a style that is inimitable. One evening she, Walter Duranty (*New York Times* correspondent in Moscow, on vacation in Berlin), and I happened to meet in the Adlon Bar. Dorothy evoked roars of

laughter as she recounted in the funniest American slang weird experiences in Moscow. Walter Duranty, in a polished English accent, continued with a tale depicting his vermin-ridden Moscow apartment, the impossibility of getting a daily hot bath, the steam heating that never functioned, and the house elevator that made its last trip back in 1917. "Why, you can't even buy a razor blade in the bally hole," Walt complained.

As usual, the conversation finally turned toward politics and, since it was impossible to talk about the political situation in Germany in 1932 without talking about Adolf Hitler, we finally reached the popular subject that dominated every European café, restaurant, and club meeting in those days: "What's your opinion about Hitler?"

Duranty made an effort to be fair, Dorothy got furious. She never could tolerate contradiction. Poor husband Sinclair Lewis—no wonder he disespoused her. The tirade that Dorothy let loose against Hitler was about the most vicious outburst I had ever witnessed. She ended it with, "Well, I'm seeing him tomorrow morning."

My last-minute efforts to prevent the interview were unsuccessful. Punctually at the appointed hour that morning Dorothy's beefy contour hove in sight. Four seconds after Adolf Hitler had walked into the room, Dorothy "knew" that "this man would never become Chancellor of Germany." That, at least, was the opening sentence of her widely read "I Saw Hitler" interview that later appeared in pamphlet form in millions of copies and many languages. As a prophet, Dorothy wasn't so hot.

"GET IT FIRST BUT FIRST GET IT RIGHT"

A few weeks after Hitler came into power, lanky Edward Deuss, Berlin correspondent of International News Service, sat crouched over his typewriter one morning, putting the finishing touches to what he considered to be about the best story he had ever turned out. Ed smiled,

lit a cigarette, then yanked the story out of the machine and yelled, "Max, get London."

Fifteen minutes later the office boy Max was shouting the story through the telephone to London, and another fifteen minutes later another office boy in New York rushed into the cable editor's office of INS with a couple of yards of fluttering paper tape bearing the following cable from Berlin: INTERNEWS NEWYORK DEUSS STOP MURDERED JEWS BEING BURIED WEISSENSEE JEWISH CEMETERY DAILY STOP POWERFUL STORMTROOPER CAR UPDRIVES CEMETERY ENTRANCE STORMTROOPERS OUTJUMP CAR HURL BODIES MURDERED JEWS IN GUTTER THEN SHOUT TO GATEKEEPER QUOTE BURY THE BASTARDS UNQUOTE CAR RACES OFF RETURNS FEW HOURS LATER WITH MORE JEWS. The cable editor rubbed his hands. Now there at last was a story. Almost every New York evening paper front-paged it with a screeching banner headline, and street sales soared to a new high.

I asked Deuss that afternoon if he was sure his story was sufficiently watertight to weather the storm that was sure to break loose. "Aw, shut up and mind your own business," was his reply. But when, on the afternoon of the following day, Chancellor Hitler referred to the story in a Reichstag world-wide radio hookup speech in terms so unequivocal that the innocent heaved a sigh of relief, Deuss began to get nervous.

Then he suddenly decided to do what any cub reporter would have done *before* firing off a story loaded with so much dynamite: he hurried over to the Jewish cemetery in Weissensee to try to pick up something he would be able to stand on. True, he found a number of newly shoveled graves, but that wasn't enough. So he slipped five marks into the Jewish gardener's palm. The gardener thereupon showed him a few more new graves. Ed gradually talked himself into interpreting these as adequate evidence that his story was true.

The climax came on the morning of the next day when Deuss was summoned

to Prussia's 1933 Minister of the Interior Hermann Goering.

"Tell me, Herr Deuss, are you absolutely certain that your story about those murdered Jews is true?" Goering quietly inquired in a deep, almost fatherly voice.

"Absolutely certain, Herr Minister," Deuss snapped back.

"Did you actually see any of those murdered Jews you wrote about?"

"No, I didn't exactly see them," Deuss replied with a hesitant quiver in his voice. "But I—er—well, I saw the newly dug graves where the murdered Jews are buried, and—so—"

"Where did you see them?"

"At the Jewish cemetery in Weissensee."

"All right, we'll all motor over to the Weissensee Cemetery right away," Goering replied, rising to his feet. "You, Herr Deuss, will point out to me the graves containing the murdered Jews, and I will have those graves opened at once. If your story is true, well, then you win. But if your story should turn out to be a fake, I'm afraid . . ." The stern gleam in Goering's eyes and his firmly set jaw sent a slight chill up Deuss's spine.

"But Herr Minister—er, I am—er—that isn't fair," Deuss gasped. "Of course I—I—didn't look into the graves, but—"

"No, nor did you see any of those supposedly murdered Jews either, but you didn't hesitate to write about them, did you?" Goering answered in the same quiet voice.

Deuss finally admitted that he had bought the story from one of the countless peddlers of "confidential information" who were responsible for much of the "inside story" stuff that left Berlin in those days. He refused to accompany Goering to the cemetery and was thereupon politely ushered out of the office.

The next afternoon Deuss received a letter from the Ministry of the Interior requesting him to sign an attached state-

ment. This statement declared the murder story to be untrue and added that the undersigned, Edward Deuss, did not object to having this statement published in all German newspapers.

Deuss was beginning to get rattled. For over an hour he paced the floor of his office, frantically debating in his mind what to do. He couldn't possibly risk being expelled from Germany for sending a story that was a proven fake. Finally he typed out a message to the New York office in which he was foolish enough to ask the general manager for permission to sign the statement. New York's reply was instant: "YOU CAN SIGN ANYTHING YOU WANT AS FORMER CORRESPONDENT OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE."

As he left the Berlin office for the last time, he suddenly caught sight of a card nailed to the wall over his typewriter. Strange that he had never seen it before, although it had been there for years. It bore in big type William Randolph Hearst's advice to his correspondents: "Get it first but first get it right."

Deuss pounded the pavements of London for months. The last I heard of him was that he had finally landed a small job with the British Ministry of Information.

SERBIA'S KINGS DON'T DIE IN BED

Autumn in Vienna is almost as delightful a season as spring-time. I had lunched on the Cobenzl with my trustiest pipe line in the Bundeskanzlei and made a detour through the beautiful Wiener Wald on the way back. Then I ambled over to John Gunther's apartment for tea. As usual his place teemed with visitors. Roy Panton, Vienna correspondent of the *London Daily Express*, was the center of attraction that afternoon. The night before his car had run over a pedestrian. Fearing that the police might discover how drunk he was when the accident happened, he abandoned the unfortunate victim, raced home, and went to bed to sleep it off before the police arrived. Meanwhile passers-by who had remembered his car

number took the poor pedestrian to the hospital.

John Gunther, always looking for a laugh, thought it was a great joke the way Panton led the Viennese police by the nose. Mrs. Gunther took a more feminine attitude, pitied the pedestrian, and threatened to write a story for the *London News Chronicle* whose Vienna correspondent she was, to let the world know what a depraved crowd Vienna's foreign journalists were. Mrs. Panton, Russian by birth, insisted in broken English that a drunkard like her husband would have been hanged and quartered in Russia in the days when her father was one of the myriad generals which that great empire evidently once possessed. Incidentally, it cost Panton a lot of bribes and an expensive lawyer to prove finally that the accident was the pedestrian's fault.

Back in the Bristol Hotel, I glanced at the evening papers. There was nothing stirring. My calendar revealed an early dinner engagement with the Yugoslav press attaché on board a newly arrived Serbian Danube barge. These barges were remarkable vessels, built in Germany (free of charge, as reparations deliveries), all-steel, with powerful motors, cozy dining room, electric kitchen, and spotlessly clean cabins. Serbian officers commanded the barges.

In the act of boarding a taxi I was called back to the hotel. London was on the line. "King Alexander of Yugoslavia has been assassinated in Marseilles. Proceed to Belgrade at once. Hire a plane if necessary." That was the sensational message London relayed to me from New York.

Belgrade is bad enough when everything is normal. But when Serbia mourns, all visible life in Belgrade is blotted out. They cling to tradition, these tough, sinewy Serbs, although rarely if ever do their kings die in bed.

I booked a room in the Srpsky Kral, reputed to be Belgrade's only hotel without bedbugs. Every other day they take the beds apart and blow hot steam

into their joints to hold off the continuous onslaught of vermin.

Celebrities were flocking in from all over the Balkans, and next morning the hotel porter informed me that I would have to share my double room with someone else. I could take my choice from among a Montenegrin field marshal, an Albanian general, or the Vienna correspondent of the *London Times*, Clarence Gedye. That choice was easy. I like French perfume when it's on a charming woman, but these perfumed Balkan generals

My roommate Gedye spoke very little and drank excessively. In the early morning hours he would stagger noisily into the room, fumble with the lamp, and go through the motions of reading in bed, although he almost immediately began to snore terribly. I invariably had to get up and turn out the light he had left burning. Otherwise he was good company and once told me more about his well-known book written right after World War I, in which he presented the German side of the war in a very fair-minded manner.

The days dragged on, but the warship carrying Alexander's bomb-torn body had still not arrived in Split. The hotel bar was our main hang-out, and we tried to kill time as best we could after we had eaten up all the oysters in town and motored out to beautiful Oplanec to see the tombs of the other murdered kings. The bar was mainly populated by Serbian secret police of the Edgar Wallace type. When we entered the bar, each of them was deeply absorbed by the newspaper held before his eyes. Closer scrutiny, however, revealed their eyes to be rolling in all directions while they strained their ears to catch every word we spoke. Our every move aroused suspicion.

One day Panton, our chief buffoon, decided to give them something to do. He sneaked up to his room, wrapped one of his roommate's shoes in a lot of stiff packing paper, and then came rushing down to the bar with the bundle held out at arm's length, yelling at the top

of his voice. "Help, help, a bomb, I found it under my bed!"

Considerable excitement followed and caused us a great deal of fun. One of the stooges dove for the telephone to call the fire department, another one scrambled upstairs to get fingerprints, while a third ran out on the street to call more police. The brainiest of the lot came limping in with a pail full of water into which the "bomb" was immediately submerged. (Serbs are old hands at handling bombs.) After a brief period of tense waiting, the package was carefully unwrapped by a bomb expert who had meanwhile arrived. Finally the water-soaked shoe appeared. Thereafter relations with our secret-agent bar neighbors cooled off noticeably.

The following evening I was sitting in a quiet corner of the bar playing chess with witty, quick-thinking Vernon Bartlett, the *London News Chronicle's* special correspondent, when Ward Price, sleek and monocle-eyed as usual, glided in. He spotted me, took me to one side, and asked if I would do him a favor. He had a dinner engagement with a beautiful Serbian princess, but a sudden invitation from a Yugoslav bigwig unfortunately prevented him from keeping the date. Would I take her off his hands? As a matter of fact, that excuse ought to have made me suspicious. But a dinner in the company of a charming princess was enticing, considering how rare the sight of a woman had become in mourning Belgrade. I consented. But after speaking with the girl I quickly changed my mind and managed to pass her on to Panton, for she was neither a princess nor beautiful nor a Serb. To be exact, she hailed from northeastern Berlin and was unquestionably a member of the world's oldest profession.

The next afternoon I was privately informed that Hermann Goering was arriving by plane. I crossed the Danube and motored out to the airfield. A number of strongly perfumed, medal-bedecked Serbian generals were already waiting. On one side of the airfield, nine French fighter planes were drawn up in line.

Their pilots had requested direction half a dozen times during their flight from Paris and even then missed the field by miles, so the Yugoslav radio operator told me. "Goering's plane asked for direction in Budapest once," he smilingly added. "Since then we have heard nothing more from the machine. It ought to be here now."

Just then a big red-and-white Ju-52 shot over the field with a roar, circled round it once, and then landed without a hitch. Goering stepped out. At that time France still held a complete monopoly over all Balkan air lines because French planes were considered the best in the world. The French pilots scowled as Goering strutted by. No wonder.

On the following morning Alexander's body finally arrived. From then on we all had plenty to do. One difficulty confronting us was that of getting our calls through in time to Berlin, Paris, and London. The only one who didn't complain was Panton. Later we found out why. He had secretly distributed a dozen or so boxes of chocolates among the operators in the telephone exchange. All of his stories reached London first.

The funeral of King Alexander was impressively solemn and harrowing. Somehow his death seemed to symbolize more for Yugoslavia than merely the passing of another murdered king. From Belgrade to Oplanec, a distance of about ten miles, the road was lined on both sides by burly Yugoslav soldiers standing rigidly at attention. As the funeral cortege moved slowly by, tears rolled down their sun-tanned cheeks. I had never seen soldiers cry before.

THAT HECTIC YEAR 1934

It was a cold, murky day in February when the news of the Socialist revolt in Vienna reached Berlin. I tried to contact my boss, Hearst's chief European correspondent Karl H. von Wiegand, who was marooned in Paris by a general strike that had disrupted all telephone and telegraph service. The night train that thereupon rushed me to Vienna was

suddenly brought to an abrupt halt early the next morning. I poked my head out of the window and heard the staccato of machine guns and the occasional booming of artillery. Hastily grabbing my belongings I jumped from the train and joined the rest of the passengers trudging alongside the tracks.

On a small near-by hill overlooking Vienna's outskirts I saw John Gunther, William Shirer, and the American military attaché eagerly watching Major Fey's artillery blow huge holes into the brand-new million-dollar Karl Marx Building, a workers' apartment house of enormous dimensions. From the windows of the building came bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire. Then from across the tracks where our train was standing bullets also whizzed, forcing us to seek cover.

Two days later the story was over. We were just lolling around in the bar of the Grand when in puffed red-faced Hudson Hawley, Berlin's INS correspondent, successor to Deuss. We tried to tell him it was all over, that the story was licked clean, but that didn't bother Hudson. He grabbed a taxi and disappeared. Where he went I don't know but of course he saw nothing because there was nothing more to see. Later I read his story. It was the most dramatic depiction of house-to-house fighting I had ever seen. I nearly wept when I read it although I knew it was all his imagination. Incidentally, he beat us all with the play his story got in New York.

At the Café Louvre, Vienna's "Adlon Bar," I had a date that afternoon with one-eyed Bill Shirer, the Chicago *Tribune's* Vienna correspondent. It was the customary Café Louvre afternoon séance with crystal-gazer Janos Fedor presiding. Others present were Gunther, Panton, and Gedyé. Fedor was a clever, analytically-minded Hungarian Jew, shaggy haired and with an austere air that at first glance commanded respect. When he parted his lips to speak, a hush came over his circle of followers, who absorbed his words as if coming from an oracle. Fedor is credited with having supplied most of the raw material for John Gun-

ther's *Inside Europe*. Now in New York, Fedor is doing a roaring business with more "inside stories," chiefly about "behind-the-scenes-in-Germany," although I cannot remember ever having seen him in Berlin.

Bill Shirer was a quiet, hard-working reporter who always imagined that he was being shadowed by some sort of sinister forces. Before he said anything he looked stealthily about him and then dared not raise his voice much above a whisper. His one eye always troubled him ever since losing the other when he plunged into a ski stick on the snow-covered Semmering. His thick glasses and an everlasting scowl gave him a gloomy air. Two years later when I went to Philadelphia as foreign editor of the *Inquirer*, Arno Dosch-Fleurot, INS's Paris correspondent, succeeded in selling Bill Shirer to New York as my successor in Berlin.

Six months later I was winging my way back to Vienna. In Prague the wobbly old Fokker came down with a bump and, when it rose again, H. R. Knickerbocker and I were its only passengers. I munched Knick's sandwiches while he smoked my cigarettes. We both got to the Bundeskanzlei in time to see Major Fey and his collaborators leaning over the balcony's balustrade, negotiating with the other half of the Austrian Government standing on the sidewalk below. Violent gesticulations accompanied their excited shouts. It was a scene for Franz Lehár.

That night, all telephone and telegraph wires having been cut by the government, John Gunther volunteered to take us over to Bratislava in his eight-cylinder Ford. Through pitch-dark sidestreets and past heavily armed *Heimwehr* guards, John carefully piloted us out of Austria's capital. Other occupants of the car were Knickerbocker, Fedor, Gedye and Pantón. The Czech frontier guards didn't want to let us pass so we all chipped in and gave the leader a generous tip.

In Bratislava we found telephones of the kind they used before the automobile

was invented. It was a nerve-wracking ordeal first to get a connection and then to hold on to it. On the way back the Czech of before humbly informed me that Czechs don't take tips and would I please take back the money we had given him. I finally took it, and while the car moved on I counted the money. Half of it was missing.

Two days later we stood in the stately old St. Stephan's Cathedral, jammed in among a multitude of *Vaterländische Front* Austrians listening to beautifully sung chorals. Chancellor Dollfuss' funeral would have been much more impressive if it hadn't been turned into a political demonstration bristling with so many sub-machine guns, rifles, and pistols.

The next evening I planned to relax and see *Lohengrin* in Vienna's magnificent opera house with its world-famous singers. But before getting that far, Berlin came through with the flash that Hindenburg was dying.

No night plane was available so we made a dash for the Westbahnhof, where the station-master had assured our hotel porter that the night express would be held up till we got there. (In Vienna that sort of thing was possible.) Five minutes behind schedule the train rolled out. We cut across Poland and arrived the next afternoon in Freystadt, East Prussia, about a mile from Hindenburg's Neudeck. Sleepy little Freystadt had become the world's center of interest and was buzzing with excitement. Its population had been doubled overnight by newspaperdom's celebrities who were pouring in from everywhere. We were quartered in private houses. I slept in the parlor of the village schoolteacher's home, while Jules Sauerwein, the Paris *Matin's* famous savant, was quartered in the sitting room.

The aged field marshal did not die until ten days later, so that we had plenty of time to tour Freystadt's environs and go swimming in the famous Mazurian lakes, at the bottom of which lie thousands of drowned Russians.

I had the privilege of being included among the few who were permitted to see the body of the field marshal at Neudeck estate before it was placed in the casket. There lay Germany's grand old man, in a simple brass bed surrounded by the Spartan simplicity characteristic of the old Prussian officer. A luster of exalted sublimity seemed to hover over the mortal remains of this great man. The deeply grooved features of his magnificent head were as if hewn in stone.

That night when Freystadt's church bell struck twelve a mighty cortege began to move. At its head was the coffin borne on a gun carriage. Thousands of somber-faced soldiers carrying torchlights followed with measured tread. At daybreak the solemn procession reached the mammoth Tannenberg monument within whose granite walls Field Marshal von Hindenburg was interred.

Back in Berlin, I was informed that Randolph Churchill, son of Winston, had called up and was staying at the Bristol. Young Randolph blew into town every six months or so and was excellent company, as keenly interested in politics as he was in night clubs. But the stories he wrote for the *Daily Express* were full of rare words no newspaperman ever uses, savoring of an Oxford education but a puerile mind.

Several weeks after Randolph had left for the French Riviera, Knickerbocker began pulling wires to get an interview with the Führer. Then Knick did what any newspaperman can only do once: he double-crossed the man whose hospitality he had accepted and maliciously misquoted the Führer's words. For a couple of days Knick got into the headlines, but no serious-minded newspaperman had much respect for him after that, for he had violated the fundamental ethics of the guild. The Reich Government did not do him the favor of expelling him. However, from then on he found Berlin's doors locked. He finally moved to Paris and was never seen in Germany again.

IN PARIS WE PARTED

On June 13, 1940, the German Army rolled into Paris. Our unit, bearing the awe-inspiring name of *Kriegsberichterstaffel des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht* (War-Reporter Unit of the German Army's High Command), was quartered in the Hotel Scribe, just around the corner from the Place de la Concorde.

Almost every one of Paris' No. 1 foreign correspondents had made a dash for dear life when the German Army moved in. They had benevolently left their office assistants behind to be slaughtered by the Huns. Either the chiefs had a very bad conscience, or they'd fallen for their own propaganda. Anyway, the abandoned assistants weren't slaughtered. On the contrary, I for my part was ordered by the German High Command to grant American correspondents all possible aid. At first they were scared and suspicious, but when they saw we were sincere they gradually warmed up, and in the end they were glad they had stayed. From then on Paris stories (and there were plenty of them) bore their by-line and not their chiefs'.

Meanwhile, eminent Demaree Bess, Triton among the minnows, imagining himself to be in a predicament, dared not leave his hotel room. A couple of months before the Maginot Line caved in, he had written an article for *The Saturday Evening Post* (whose correspondent he was, after leaving *The Christian Science Monitor*) containing a few things about Heinrich Himmler that now troubled his conscience and made him fear for the worst. We contacted Berlin via the German Embassy and made inquiries. A week later Demaree Bess was invited to Berlin, where he was flabbergasted to learn that Heinrich Himmler himself had magnanimously arranged the invitation. Bess was free to write anything he pleased. He thereupon toured all occupied territories from Narvik to Warsaw, The Hague, and Brussels. His brilliant series of observations appearing in America's biggest weekly aroused the interest of the world and went a long way to clarify misconceptions among the ill-informed.

At the American Press Club the story was told amidst roars of laughter of how Dorothy Thompson and H. R. Knickerbocker had raced head-over-heels out of Paris when it suddenly became known that the Germans were at the city's gates. Dorothy and Knick, it was said, seriously believed that the German Blitz was carried out with such haste mainly in order to take them prisoner and bring them back to Berlin.

As time went on, I could feel that the originally friendly attitude of the Paris foreign correspondents was being adversely influenced by a mysterious source. It turned out to be fifty-year-old masculine-voiced Anne Morgan, spinster sister of John Pierpont Morgan. I called on her one morning in the office of her charity decoy where she directed the succoring of young French girls (providing they were pretty). Cigar-smoking Anne swagged up and down spouting bombastic nonsense in a guttural voice. She evidently feared that a Franco-German reconciliation might endanger her brother's future profits and even terminate her voluptuous pastimes as well. But she was by no means impolite, offered me a good cigarette and even a chair, but that was about all.

One evening, while I was dining in the basement of the Scribe, the whole Berlin gang marched in, led by blond, blue-eyed Lieutenant Carl Bömer, the Propaganda Ministry's brilliant foreign-press chief. Pierre Huss of INS (Hawley's successor) spotted me in a flash and dragged me into the bar. Others in the group were William Shirer (now with CBC), Carl Oechsner, Louis Lochner, Otto Tolischus, and James Kirk (NBC).

A few days later we met in Compiègne to cover the Armistice story. In Compiègne's vast forest, amidst giant trees, stood a microphone that was hooked up directly with Berlin, from there (by short wave) with New York, and then (by cable and long wave) with every American home. Bill Shirer took the lead, talked his piece through the mike and, through a censorship freak, was the first to break the news of the Armistice's signing to

the American public. He got profuse congratulations from New York that night although he didn't know why until weeks later. Kirk followed with his tale, and then it was my turn.

Night was falling as I signed off while the famed *wagon salon* which saw the conclusion of two truces rolled slowly out over newly laid tracks on its way to Berlin.

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Today the Adlon Bar gang is no more. Ward Price after returning to London got into trouble for being too pro-German. Vernon Bartlett entered politics and became a Member of Parliament. Roy Panton was too slow in getting out of Copenhagen and was interned on a small Danish island. One day a short-wave radio station was discovered in his isolated domicile. Since there was reason to believe that a British plane had parachuted it into his backyard, he was taken to a spot less dangerous.

Dorothy Thompson, William Shirer, Louis Lochner, and John Gunther can be heard over American radio stations any night telling the world "what American commentators say." H.R. Knickerbocker is cleaning up considerable cash lecturing to gullible American audiences, while Douglas Miller has made a State Department career. Pierre Huss was last heard from as a war reporter in North Africa. In Shanghai I was surprised to find Karl H. von Wiegand living in the same hotel I had put up in; and in Tokyo, two summers ago, I suddenly discovered Otto Tolischus standing next to me in a crowded hotel elevator.

Practically every one of the Adlon Bar gang, whether they hold a rifle, pound a typewriter, or stand before the microphone, is now fighting for his or her respective country in a war that knows no compromise. And I am afraid it will be a long, long time before the walls of the Adlon Bar echo again with the mirth and laughter of former enemies reconciled.